



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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Maryland Electronic Health Record Incentive Program Open for Business

Baltimore (October 3, 2011) -- Beginning today, Maryland medical providers and hospitals who adopt, implement, upgrade or demonstrate meaningful use of Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology will be able to register to receive funds through the federal Medicaid Electronic Health Record Incentive Program, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) announced.

The program, funded by federal dollars through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), will help Maryland continue to work toward its goal of encouraging widespread adoption of EHRs and establishing a comprehensive statewide, private-public, and secure health information exchange, one of Governor Martin O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Anthony G. Brown's 15 strategic goals for Maryland.

"Governor O'Malley and I are committed to making Maryland a leader in health information technology because we understand it will help reduce costs while increasing quality and improving the coordination of care for all Marylanders," said Lt. Governor Brown. "Through this incentive program, we will be able to help more providers adopt electronic health records so they have the right information to provide the right care at the right time."

Physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, dentists, or physician assistants (who furnish services in a Federally Qualified Health Center that is led by a physician assistant) who participate in Medicaid and meet specified Medicaid patient volume thresholds are eligible for the program. Hospitals that are acute-care facilities with at least 10 percent Medicaid patient volume, as well as children's hospitals, are also eligible to receive funds under the program.

"Widespread use of electronic health records is a critical component of Maryland's strategy for improving health information technology, and therefore improving health outcomes," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary of DHMH. "Sharing data through a statewide health information exchange will greatly benefit patients across Maryland."

The program runs through 2021, with any provider eligible to participate for up to six (consecutive or inconsecutive) years. The bulk of the payment is made in the first year of participation, and is triggered by the adoption, implementation or upgrading of certified EHR technology. For the first year, a provider will receive \$21,250. In each additional year of

participation, the provider would earn \$8,500 if he/she meets the “meaningful use” requirements established by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).

Eligible hospitals would receive a \$2 million base incentive, plus additional amounts reflecting Medicaid inpatient bed-days and other factors. Hospital incentive payments are calculated when the hospital registers to participate, and would be disbursed over four years.

“We are pleased that Maryland’s Electronic Health Records incentive program is open for business, as it will give providers the motivation to improve their technology, and the state’s health information network, and it will reward those providers who have already done so,” said Charles J. Milligan, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Health Care Financing.

Once a provider has registered, their eligibility will be reviewed by CMS. DHMH anticipates that the first payments to providers will be made in late December 2011. They estimate that it will make nearly \$50 million in incentive payments to eligible providers and hospitals between December 2011 and the end of the Fiscal Year in September 2012, and that the amount will increase as more providers and hospitals enter the program.

For more information, visit <http://www.dhmd.state.md.us/mma/ehr/index.html>. For questions, email MarylandEHR@dhmd.state.md.us. Providers can go to <https://ehrincentives.cms.gov/hitech/login.action> to register for the incentive.

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